

## [Bailey Bell]

1

Folk Stuff Range Lore

Range-lore

Annie McAulay

Maverick, Texas

Page one

RANGE-LORE

Bailey Bell was born at Denton, Texas, June 21, 1891. He moved with his parents to Coke County in 1907.

His story follows: "I can't remember when I learned to sit on a horse. All boys learned to ride young them days. My father always kept a small herd and I learned to help work cattle when I was at home.

"I began riding for Suggs and Roberts on the Hat H ranch in 1910. It extended north and east of Post, Texas, for many miles. The townsite of Slaton, Texas, was sold off this 26,000 acre ranch.

"We had a tough time or rather the cattle did, during the drouth of 1910 and 1911. C.12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 Water and grass seemed to get scarcer until they were forced to sell off much of the herd to keep them from starving. Many thousands were shipped out of that part of the country. Our outfit shipped out four train-loads at one time. There came a time when we had to kill all the young calves. Much of the old and poor stuff we'd kill and skin,

## Library of Congress

then sell the hides. It was impossible to find feed and water to keep them alive and they were too poor or young to ship.

“All the cattle was poor and weak of course, and so we had lots of trouble with them getting in the bog. The double fork of the Brazos river ran through the range and they depended on it for most of the water, when it was dry. Well, the river was low and when they bogged down, we'd have to pull 'em out. It was an every day business too.

“The boys on the Hat H ranch sure liked to devil the new hands. When I first went to work there, they of course, had to pull one of their jokes on me.

“They had an old saddle horse on the ranch, they called old Mule Ear. He was as gentle as a dog, but had been trained to kick up and pitch when he was cheeked. So the very first day I was there, one of the boys told me about that particular horse's peculiarities. Only he said that if the rider failed to cheek him as soon as he mounted him he'd start pitching. The boy made it very plain that he was telling me all this in confidence and as a special favor to me, and warned me that if I ever had to ride him, to be sure to follow his instructions 3 and I'd not have any trouble. The very next day I had a chance to remember his advice. The boys of course very cleverly managed it. They told me the boss said I was to ride old Mule Ear that day. Well, I didn't mind, as I felt sure I knew how to manage him.

“Well, I crawled on him and the first thing I did was to give him a good cheek. He began pitching and the first thing I knew the earth came into my way. The boys just whooped and yelled. I didn't feel any too good about it all, but I couldn't do anything but take it. I found that it was an old gag of theirs and one that they enjoyed more than any other.

“I went out to Ft. Stockton in 1912, and worked awhile on a ranch. Finally, I got a job on the Hood and Mendall spread. Hood and Mendall were cattle dealers or traders. They ran lots of stuff on the alfalfa fields. And when they were fat they'd sell and buy others to fatten. I was in the Big Bend country, when Dud Barker and John Hightower killed five

## Library of Congress

Mexican railroad hands. The Mexicans at the camp started some kind of rough house and a fight ensued in which five of them were killed.

"I remember what a hard time we had trying to deliver seven hundred head of steers to Boston Ward & Co., while I was out there. We was takin' them to an alfalfa field near Pecos. We didn't have any trouble 'til we got to the Pecos river and found it bank full of water. It looked plum foolish and risky to me but we swam our herd and didn't lose a single one of them. 4 "I enlisted for army service at Ft. Clark in 1914, and was in service two years. We was strung up and down the Rio Grande to protect the border during the Mexican Revolution. Our troop covered an eighty-mile line down as far as Del Rio. I was stationed on the Blocker ranch four months. It lay right on the border and had been raided, supposedly by some of of Villa's gang.

"We were sent - during the revolution - to Ojinaga, opposite Presidio, and brought back 360 refugees to Marfa. They had been captured by Francisco Villa's band and after he had plundered to his satisfaction turned them loose to starve. Some of them were white and of course all were really American citizens. Pretty soon after this we were called back to Ft. Clark."

\*\*\*\*\*

Reference- Bailey Bell, Bronte, Texas. Interviewed June 2, 1938. 1 Beliefs and Customs - Occupational lore

Mrs. Annie McAulay

Maverick Texas

Runnels County

Page One [dup?]

## Library of Congress

### COWBOY LORE

BAILEY BELL was born at Denton Texas, June 21, 1891. He moved with his parents to Coke County in 1907.

Mr. Bell Says, "I can't remember when I learned to sit on a horse. All boys learned to ride young them days. My father always kept a small herd and I learned to help work cattle when I was at home.

"I began riding for Suggs and Roberts on / The Hat H ranch [?] in 1910. It extended north and east of Post, Texas, for many miles. The townsite of Slaton, Texas, was sold off this 26000 26,000 acre ranch.

"We had a tough time or rather the cattle did, during the drouth of 1910 and 1911. Water and grass seemed to get scarcer until they were forced to sell off much of the herd to keep them from staving starving . Many thousands were shipped out of that part of the country. Our outfit shipped out four trainloads at one time. There came a time when we had to kill all the young calves. Much of the old and poor stuff we'd kill and skin, then sell the hides. It was impossible to find feed and water to keep them alive and they were too poor or young to ship.

"All the cattle was poor and weak of course, and so we had lots of trouble with them getting in the bog. The double fork of the Brazos river ran through the range and they depended on it for most of the water, when it was dry. Well, the river / was low and when they bogged down, we'd have to pull 'em out. C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 It was an every day business too.

"The boys on / The Hat H. shore liked to devil the new hands. When I first went to work there, they of course, had to pull one of hteir their jokes on me.

## Library of Congress

"They had an old saddle horse on the ranch, they called Ol /Old Mule Ear. He was as gentle as a dog, but had been trained to kick up and pitch when he was cheeked. So the very first day I was there, one of the boys told me about that particular horse's peculiarities. Only he said that if the rider failed to cheek him as soon as he mounted him he'd start pitching. The boy made it very plain that he was telling me all this in confidence and as a special favor to me . , /And warned me that if I ever had to ride him, to be sure and certain to follow his instructions and I'd not have any trouble. The very next day I had a chance to remember his advice. The boys of course, very cleverly managed it. They told me the boss said I was to ride Ole /Old Mule Ear that day. Well, I didn't mind , as I felt sure I knew how to / Manage him.

"Well, I crawled on him and the first thing I did was to give him a good cheek. He began pitching and the first thing I knew the earth came into to my way. The boys just whooped and yelled. I didn't feel any too good about it all, but I couldn't do anything but take it. I found that it was an old gag of theirs and one that they enjoyed more then any other.

"I went out to Ft. Stockton in 1912, and worked awhile on a The Scharboy Ranch. [????] ranch. Finally, I got a job on / The Hood 3 / And Mendall spread. Hood and Mendall were cattle dealers or traders. They ran lots of stuff on the alfalfa fields. And when they were fat they'd sell and buy others to fatten. I was with them the day Woodrow Wilson was elected President. I witnessed the building / of the Orient railroad. I was in the Big Bend country, when Dud Barker and John Hightower killed five Mexican railroad hands. The Mexicans at the camp started some kind of rough house and a fight ensued in which five of them were killed. " I remember what a hard time we had trying to deliver seven hundred head of steers to Boston Ward & Co., while [?] I was out there. We was takin ' them to an alfalfa field near Pecos. We didn't have any trouble 'til we got to the Pecos river and found it banks bank full of water. It looked plum foolish and risky to me but we swam our herd and didn't lose a single one of them.

## Library of Congress

"I enlisted for army service at Ft. Clark in 1914 , and [?] was in service two years. We was strung up and down the Rio Grande to protect the border during the Mexican Revolution. Our troop covered an eighty-mile line down as far as Del Rio. I was stationed on the Blocker ranch four months. It lay right on the border and had been raided, supposedly by some of Villas Villa's gang.

"We were sent-during the revolution- to [?] Ojinaga , opposite Presidio, and brought back 360 refugees to Marfa. They had been captured by Francisco Villas Villa's band and after he had plundered to his satisfaction turned them loose to starve. Some of them were white and of course all were really American citizens. Pretty soon after this we were called back to Ft. Clark. " Bibliography. Bailey Bell, Bronte Texas: Cowhand and Citizen of Coke County,